



For Immediate Release

Contact: Craig Orfield
(202) 224-6770

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***ENZI: SENATE WASTING TIME ON CARD CHECK'S POLITICAL PAYBACK
AS STRUGGLING FAMILIES NEED NEW KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS***

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY) Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today scolded Senate leaders for wasting time on passing a political payback bill such as Card Check just to benefit big labor, while ignoring programs to develop new knowledge and skills that would help the nation's beleaguered middle class cope, compete, and remain on the job in today's turbulent economy.

"The card check bill is not about the economy, and it is not about restoring the middle class. Card Check is all about giving a gift to labor bosses at the expense of both the economy and the middle class," Enzi said prior a hearing today, "Rebuilding Economic Security: Empowering Workers to Restore the Middle Class." "The worldwide economic backslide of the past year has brought fear and anxiety to nearly every American home, and Card Check is no remedy for families struggling improve their lives."

Card Check, the so-called "Employee Free Choice Act," would actually strip away an employee's opportunity to vote on whether or not to unionize through a secret ballot election. It would also create an unworkable system of mandatory interest arbitration that would give government bureaucrats almost total control over individual workplaces, and allow third parties to dictate the provisions of labor contracts between businesses and their employees. Up to 600,000 American workers may lose their jobs next year if the bill becomes law, according to a report [<http://ssrn.com/abstract=1353305>] prepared by Dr. Anne Layne-Farrar, a noted, non-partisan economist with the firm LECG Consulting.

The study also finds that if Card Check resulted in a 3 percent increase in unionization, 1.6 million workers would lose their jobs or not be able to find new employment. If, as proponents of the bill claim, Card Check were to result in a 10 percent rise in union membership, another 3.5 percent increase in the unemployment rate, or the loss of up to 5.4 million jobs, could be the result.

"This transparent payback to union bosses would obviously come at a terrible price to the US economy and US workers," Enzi said.

Enzi called for the Senate to re-focus its work on real programs to improve the nation's job training system by reauthorizing the "Workforce Investment Act" – legislation that will help

states and local communities connect local training to local jobs while allowing them to target resources to populations in highest need of services and training. Although the HELP Committee unanimously approved a WIA bill and the full Senate passed it twice, WIA is now six years overdue for reauthorization. That same bipartisan WIA reauthorization, which was negotiated by Enzi, would help about 900,000 people a year launch new career paths in high growth, high wage, high demand jobs.

Education and training yields higher incomes, greater job satisfaction and greater economic mobility, Enzi emphasized. “Whether it’s a masters degree, an apprenticeship, or a long distance learning certificate, life-long access to learning opportunities is a key part of becoming and remaining economically secure,” he said. In 1950 the Department of Labor categorized 80 percent of the nation’s jobs as “unskilled.” Today, DOL categorizes over 80 percent of all jobs as “skilled.” By some estimates, 4 out of every 5 new jobs being created will require some education beyond high school.

“The transparent motives behind Card Check are clear when you consider that unions already win well over half of the secret ballot certification elections in which they participate. In fact, in the first half of last year, unions won 66.8 percent of secret ballot elections conducted by the National Labor Relations Board – the highest win rate ever recorded,” Enzi said. “Yet proponents of this legislation claim that record high win rates are not enough.”

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